

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A microscope stage comprising:
an upper stage comprising a first color; said upper stage comprising a recess therein; and
a non-transparent contrasting stage insert ~~;~~ ~~—said~~ ~~contrasting stage insert~~ comprising a second color different from said first color; said non-transparent contrasting stage insert configured for removable complementarily receipt within said recess.
2. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 1 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises alignment means for aligning said contrasting stage insert within said recess.
3. (Original) The microscope stage of Claim 2 wherein said alignment means comprises a recess pin and a contrasting stage insert bore.
4. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 1 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises releasable fastening means.

5. (Original) The microscope stage of Claim 4 wherein said releasable fastening means comprises a magnet.

6. (Original) The microscope of Claim 4 wherein said releasable fastening means comprises a springed detent.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) A microscope stage comprising:

an upper stage comprising a first color; and

a non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprising a second color, said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprising a portion of said upper stage background.

10. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 9 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises a painted surface.

11. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 9 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises a magnetic surface.

12. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 9 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises an adhesive film.

13. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 9 wherein said upper stage comprises a recess and said non-transparent contrasting stage insert is operatively arranged for releasable complementary receipt therein.

14. (Currently amended) The microscope stage of Claim 13 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert further comprises alignment means.

15. (Currently amended) The microscope of Claims 13 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert further comprises fastening means.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently amended) A device for providing contrast between a microscope stage and a specimen comprising:

a microscope stage comprising a non-transparent contrasting stage insert having a first color;

a specimen comprising a second color;

said first color of said non-transparent contrasting stage insert being different from said second color of said specimen.

18. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 17 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert is releasably secured to said microscope stage.

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19. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 17 wherein said non-transparent contrasting stage insert comprises a releasable fastening means.

20. (Original) The device of Claim 19 wherein said fastening means comprises a magnet.